

FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA, THOMAS HOLME BRANCH
(Free Library of Philadelphia, Holmesburg Branch)
7810 Frankford Avenue
Philadelphia
Philadelphia
Pennsylvania

HABS PA-6754
PA-6754

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA, THOMAS HOLME BRANCH

HABS NO. PA-6754

Location: 7810 Frankford Avenue at the corner of Hartel Street, Holmesburg neighborhood, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania.

Owner: The library is part of the Free Library of Philadelphia system and is owned by the City of Philadelphia.

Present Use: Branch library

Significance: Completed in 1906, the Thomas Holme Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia was the fifth of twenty-five branch libraries built through an endowment from industrialist-turned-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. The impact of Carnegie's grant program on the development of public libraries cannot be overstated. He came of age in an era when libraries were rare, privately funded institutions and access was through subscription. Believing in the power of libraries to create an egalitarian society that favored hard work over social privilege by allowing equal access to knowledge, between 1886 and 1917 he provided forty million dollars for the construction of 1,679 libraries throughout the nation. The vast resources that he allotted to library research and construction contributed significantly to the development of the American Library as a building type. In addition, by insisting that municipalities supply a building site, books, and annual maintenance funds before bestowing grants Carnegie elevated libraries from the arena of private philanthropy to that of civic responsibility.

Philadelphia was the recipient of one of the largest Carnegie grants for library construction. Although the city was among the first to establish a free library system, it had no purpose-built structures prior to the Carnegie endowment. The branch libraries were built between 1905 and 1930, under the direction of the city appointed Carnegie Fund Committee, and designed by a "who's-who" of Philadelphia's architects. The twenty extant branch libraries remain as a remarkable intact and cohesive grouping, rivaled only by that of New York City, with fifty-seven.¹ The Thomas Holme Branch was designed by architect Horace W. Castor, of the firm of Sterns & Castor, and is the quintessential Carnegie branch library. It follows the almost formulaic model that came to define Carnegie Libraries nationwide, consisting of a Beaux Arts style, brick structure in a T-shaped configuration. Thomas Holme is the smallest of the Philadelphia branch libraries, yet no less distinctive in its detailing. The library is named for

¹ Carnegie provided funding beginning in 1903 for thirty branch libraries, but with rising construction costs, only twenty-five could be built. Of Philadelphia's twenty-five libraries, four are no longer extant and a fifth (Frankford) has been greatly altered. Four others are no longer used as library buildings. In New York, fifty-seven were still standing, and fifty-four still operating as libraries as of 1996. The next single largest grants for branch libraries were given to Cleveland (15), Baltimore (14), and Cincinnati (10).

William Penn's surveyor general, who was given this land as payment for his services in laying out the town of Philadelphia. The lot was donated by the local Lower Dublin Academy through an endowment established by the Holme family for educational purposes. While originally providing for a school, a library was considered by the trustees and the community to be a significant educational contribution, a concept shared by the Carnegie Corporation.

Historian: Catherine C. Lavoie

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: According to the date stone and the plaques mounted on the walls in the entry vestibule, the Thomas Holme Branch was built in 1906, although as the opening in June 1907 indicates, it was not completed until the following year. According to the minutes of the Carnegie Fund Committee for 19 February 1906, the plans were at that time approved and the architect was instructed to prepare the specifications for construction bids; by 6 March the committee approved a list of invited bidders for the contract. A contractor was selected by 2 April. The cornerstone was laid on 23 May 1906. The Library opening was held on 26 June 1907.

2. Architect: Horace W. Castor (1870-1966) of the architectural firm of Sterns & Castor designed the Holmesburg library. The firm was known for their residential designs, executed mostly in the Colonial Revival style, and for their design of churches, hospitals, and industrial structures. Castor was a native Philadelphian; he grew up in the Frankford neighborhood where he first established his architectural practice. He received his training at the Central Manual Training School in 1888, entering the office of Frank C. Miller that same year. He left in 1891 to establish his own practice, joining George R. Sterns in 1895. Sterns was particularly interested in structural engineering, which led to the firm's commissions for industrial and commercial buildings. Both were members of the local and national branches of the American Institute of Architects. Castor had a particular interest in history and was a member of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the Frankford Historical Society and wrote several articles on Frankford history.² He was also a member of the Illuminating Engineers Society, the Union League, and the Sons of the Revolution. Some of the building designs for which Castor is best known are the Scottish Rite Temple in Philadelphia (as well as other Masonic commissions), the Maternity Building of the Jewish Hospital, and a grouping of structures for the Pennhurst State School.

3. Owners: The library is part of the Free Library of Philadelphia system and is owned by the City of Philadelphia. The land for the library was donated by the Lower Dublin

² Roger Moss and Sandra Tatman, *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects* (Boston: G/K. Hall & Company, 1985), 135-137.

Academy. Donation was the typical means through which the lots for Carnegie funded libraries were acquired throughout the nation as well as in Philadelphia. The lot was given to the city in April 1905. The City of Philadelphia would later be called upon to provide sites, often within parks or other recreation facilities that they already owned, in order to complete their building program and round-out the distribution of libraries throughout the city.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: As the low bidder, William R. Dougherty was awarded the building contract at a cost of \$26,034, after some reductions. A contract for the heating was awarded to J.P. Rickards & Company and to Walter and Kepler for the electrical work.

5. Original plans and construction: The library remains largely as it was when it first opened. Based on a photograph taken by William Rau upon completion, the interior consisted of a large reading room divided into sections by the central circulation desk and by low shelving that ran lengthwise, to either side of the desk.³ Built-in shelving also lined the walls on all sides. The shelving and other moldings and woodwork were left unpainted. The cornice also was of (dark) wood, and wood beams framed the centrally located coffered skylight. From each corner of the skylight were hung large multi-globed brass chandeliers. Lighting fixtures also included sconces mounted atop the shelving. The rear ell of the T-shaped plan originally served as the lecture hall as well as library space. An elevated stage area flanked by Doric columns originally appeared in an alcove at the back of the room, with a separate entrance to the side designed to provide access for attendees to the lectures and for staging purposes. As the photograph depicts, the furniture consisted of round tables with Windsor style chairs and rectangular tables with Mission style chairs.

6. Alterations and additions: On the interior, a 1959 renovation resulted in new shelving, floors, furniture, (florescent) lighting, the removal of the stage, and the installation of a dropped ceiling in the rear section.⁴ Although the stage platform has been removed, the arched opening remains; the area now serves as a reading alcove. Also, staging areas located to either side of the stage were converted for use as closets. In 1982 renovations were again undertaken, including the removal of the dropped ceiling and the restoration of the wood trusses (consisting largely of paint removal). At the exterior side elevation of the library was added a niche for a memorial dedicated to local war veterans. The plaque itself was later removed to a location where it could be better conserved, as it was showing signs of decay.

³ Free Library of Philadelphia, *Annual Report of the Library Board, 1907*, William H. Rau, photographs.

⁴ "Open House Set For Library at Holmesburg," *Mayfair Times*, 22 October, 1959.

B. Historical Context:

The Carnegie Funded Free Library of Philadelphia Building Campaign

On 3 January 1903, Carnegie's secretary James Bertram responded to the Free Library of Philadelphia's request for a grant to finance the construction of libraries with the promise of \$1.5 million for a planned thirty branch libraries. Despite the fact that Philadelphia figures quite prominently on the timeline of American Library history, it had no purpose-built public libraries prior to the Carnegie endowment. Philadelphia *did* have the nation's first private subscription library, known as the Library Company, founded in 1731. Numerous other private libraries were created as well, such as the Mercantile Library, Ridgeway Library, and the library at the University of Pennsylvania. And it was in Philadelphia that the American Library Association was formed in 1876. The establishment of the Free Library in 1891 placed Philadelphia among the first American cities to institute a non-subscription public library system for the benefit of all of Philadelphia's citizens. As Library Board president J.G. Rosengarten stated in 1903, "Proprietary libraries have grown into valuable adjuncts to our other education institutions. None of them, however, serves the public as does the Free Library, providing good reading for our school children, for our industrious adult population, and for the city's useful employees, firemen, and telegraph operators."⁵ As Rosengarten's comment indicates, the library system was an important component of the city's public education.

However, prior to the Carnegie funding, the city's fourteen branch libraries, each started by interested local communities, were dependent upon old mansions, storefronts, or back rooms of commercial buildings and civic institutions for library space. As Rosengarten points out, "The [Carnegie] gift gave welcome relief from the expense of the rented rooms occupied by the branches, and from much of the risk to which the collections were subjected in these temporary quarters."⁶ Likewise, prior to the completion of its permanent home in 1927, the Central Branch of the Free Library was housed within three different preexisting buildings, including City Hall, an abandoned concert hall on Chestnut Street, and a building at the northeast corner of 13th and Locust streets. Carnegie's \$1.5 million grant would change all that. Beginning in 1905, the endowment was used for the design and construction of twenty-five branch libraries throughout the city (three of which are no longer extant). They were built between 1905 and 1930, with the bulk of them constructed by 1917, and designed by a wide range of Philadelphia architects.

Philadelphia was just one of many cities to receive a library grant. Andrew Carnegie provided forty million dollars for the construction of over 1,600 libraries throughout the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (and about 400 more abroad). Carnegie was motivated by both his own immigrant experience and by his social/political beliefs. Despite his poor, working-class upbringing, he made a fortune through the production of steel. Believing that the wealthy were obligated to give back to society, Carnegie set out to spend during his lifetime the entire 400 million dollars that he received through the sale of Carnegie Steel Company upon his retirement. Carnegie also believed that given a good work ethic and the proper tools, anyone could be successful. He was self-taught and credited his success to the

⁵ Theodore Wesley Koch, *A Book of Carnegie Libraries* (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1917), 85.

⁶ Ibid.

access that he received to one gentleman's private library. Carnegie came to believe in the power of libraries to create an egalitarian society that favored hard work over social privilege. Hence libraries, as a key to learning and socialization, became a focus of his charitable donations.

While Carnegie's motivations were in large part paternalistic, the impact of his library campaign is far greater than merely providing the working class with access to books. The vast resources that he applied to this area lead to great advances in library science as well as to the development of the American Library as a building type. Carnegie applied the corporate business models that had made him successful as an industrialist to the development and production of libraries. He insured that local municipalities had a stake in their libraries by insisting that they supply the building site and the books, as well as ten percent of the total construction cost annually for maintenance. By so doing, Carnegie took libraries from the arena of private philanthropy to that of civic responsibility. Any town that was willing to meet those terms was basically able to receive grant funding. The process began via a letter of application submitted to Andrew Carnegie's personal secretary and the individual charged with management of the library grants, James Bertram. In 1903, the city of Philadelphia did just that.

Unlike its rival New York City, Philadelphia's planning group, the Carnegie Fund Committee, placed librarians and not architects at the forefront of the planning process. This is likely the primary reason for the relative standardization of Philadelphia's branch libraries, particularly with regard to layout. This important decision on the part of the Library Board was in keeping with the sentiments endorsed by the Carnegie Corporation. James Bertram was generally distrustful of architects as library planners, believing that they tended to make libraries too expensive by adding unusable space and superfluous detail merely for affect. He preferred the advice of librarians who better understood how libraries needed to function. Both the Philadelphia Library Board and Carnegie Fund Committee included well-placed librarians, the former being Pennsylvania State Librarian and American Library Association representative Thomas L. Montgomery, and the latter, the librarian of the Free Library, John Thomson. President of the Board of Education Henry R. Edmunds was also on the Committee, an indication of the significance of the libraries to public education in Philadelphia. Prominent local businessmen and attorneys filled the other positions. As the Committee minutes indicate, the Librarian and Assistant Librarian were left to work out the details with the architects, and generally had the last say when it came to finalizing the plans.⁷ (For more information about the Carnegie Library construction program and the Free Library of Philadelphia's own library building campaign see, Free Library of Philadelphia, Central Branch, HABS No. PA-6749, Historical Context section.)

The Thomas Holme Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia

⁷ Free Library of Philadelphia, Board of Trustees, Minutes, 1 July 1904. "On motion resolved, that the matter of procuring plans and securing bids be referred to the Carnegie Fund Committee with power." And also, Carnegie Fund Committee Minutes, 17 May 1912. An entry from this meeting (one of many) illustrates that practices: "Mr. Richards [architect] be instructed to prepare plans for the proposed new Paschalville Branch and that the President be authorized to approve plans for such Branch when same were agreed upon by himself, the Librarian, Asst. Librarian and the architect."

The library is named for William Penn's surveyor general who was given this land as payment for his services in laying out the colonial era town of Philadelphia. The area was at one time referred to as Washington, but was named Holmesburg by Thomas Holme descendents when the land was sold from the family. Prior to the construction of the Thomas Holme Branch as part of the Free Library of Philadelphia, the community started its own subscription library in 1867 with funds generated from property left to the township by Thomas Holme for "school purposes." A school was managed by Holme's heirs until 1794 when a corporation was chartered as the Lower Dublin Academy. Philadelphia eventually established a public school system, and beginning in 1855, the academy property was leased to the city and a free public school called "The Thomas Holme School" was established. In the meantime, it was decided at a meeting of citizens that a public subscription library should be started in the town. Referred to as the Holmesburg Reading Room and Library Association, it was housed in the main room of the city's Athenaeum. Over time 1,109 volumes were accumulated. In 1880, it was decided that the trust used to fund the school, now public, should instead be diverted to the maintenance of the library. Thus in July the library collection, which then included 1,410 books, two tables, twelve armchairs, and four spittoons, among other items, was transferred to the Trustees of the Lower Dublin Academy. The renamed Thomas Holme Free Library reopened in the Frankford Athenaeum (8000 Frankford Avenue) on 18 September 1880, with J. Howard Morrison as its first librarian.⁸

With the persistence of the Trustees, their library was established as a branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia by an agreement dated 30 December 1899. The name and location were retained, as well as the library's collection of what then amount to 3,020 books, and it was opened to the general public. With the funds remaining from Holme's bequest, the trustees were granted permission to use it to purchase a site for a Carnegie-funded branch library building. The property was conveyed to the city in April 1905. The collection had by this time grown to over 5,000 books and when the new library was completed that number had mounted to nearly 8,000.

The cornerstone for the Thomas Holme Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia was laid on 23 May 1906 in what turned out to be a gala event for the village. The streets and nearby residences were decorated with flags and buntings and about 650 children from all the local schools were in attendance, as were their principals. Musical entertainment was provided by nearby Tacony's Germania Brass Band. Addresses were delivered by the Carnegie Fund Committee president J.G. Rosengarten, and by Committee members George S. Clark, and Henry R. Edmonds, who was also the President of the Board of Education, as well as by the Librarian of the Free Library, John Thomson. A speech was also given by Colonel William Bender Wilson who had known Andrew Carnegie for many years, working side-by-side with him as a youth on the western slopes of the Allegheny Mountains. In his opening remarks Wilson commends both immigrants from the British Isles, Holme and Carnegie:

⁸ John Thomson, "Descriptive Account of the Lower Dublin Academy and of the Thomas Holme Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia, with an address delivered by Colonel William Bender Wilson, 23 May, 1907," *Bulletin of The Free Library of Philadelphia*, No. 7 (Philadelphia, June 1907), 5-9.

The laying of this corner-stone marks the most important epoch in the history of this beautiful suburb of imperial Philadelphia. It not only signifies that the foundations for the Library structure have been completed, that a means for advanced education has come to our people, but it also signalizes the fact that old world philanthropy, separated by two centuries has untied in a common effort to place humanity on a higher plane. England of the 17th and Scotland of the 19th century each sent a son to the American shores with high ideals and high aims whose names blend harmoniously on this spot to-day. Thomas Holme and Andrew Carnegie by their benefactions made possible this gathering and this event. The former's foresight provide the ground and the latter's wisdom the means to erect the structure which is to rear its head and stand as an inspiration to storing and mind with loftier thoughts and the production of a higher civilization among those who will seek the advantages of the education that its administration will offer.⁹

The colonel's speech is significant because it alludes to the importance of libraries to the education and improvement of all citizens, but particularly to the working-class who enjoy fewer educational opportunities. Likewise, it is worth noting the presence of the school board, local educators, and school children; it speaks to the value of such an institution and its rarity within working-class communities at that time. As one of the first of the Carnegie funded libraries to be erected in the city, it is no wonder the event drew so much attention.

While no specifications for architects designing Philadelphia's branch libraries have been located, it is interesting to speculate that the design of the Holme Branch might have been the result of just such an effort. There are a few indications that an attempt was made by the Carnegie Fund Committee to develop standard plans for the branch libraries. Among the most convincing is a reference in the minutes for 1904 to a solicitation made on the part of the Committee to the well-known architectural firm of Hewitt & Hewitt for a plan for an inexpensive library prototype:

Mr. Edmunds [of the Carnegie Committee] reported that he had obtained from Messrs. Stevens and Edmunds, who are both employed in the office of Messrs. Hewitt, a plan showing what kind of building could, in their judgment, be erected for \$30,000, the building to measure 60' x 40' and to be about 45' in height.¹⁰

The brief specifications outlined are for a building that is generally smaller and certainly less expensive than those actually built. However, they do align most closely with that of the Thomas Holme Branch built not long thereafter and measuring 62' x 42'.¹¹ When the building was completed in 1906, it included the main reading room with a second reading room in the rear ell section that also doubled as a lecture hall (measuring 36' x 45'). While some of the other branch libraries used their rear sections as a dual lecture hall as well, most allocated a basement room for that purpose. The Holme Branch may have been the only branch to have a first floor lecture room that include a raised platform or stage area. When the library opened, the first "librarian-in-charge" was Katherine M. Petty, who served in that capacity in the former location as well, and whose total years of service amounted to forty-eight. In June 1907, the Dublin

⁹ Ibid., 15-17.

¹⁰ Free Library of Philadelphia, Carnegie Fund Committee, Minutes, 14 July 1904.

¹¹ The notion that a prototype or some sort of general guidelines were developed is further supported by mention in the "Committee on Comprehensive Plans," William C. Stanton, secretary Ibid., 29 November 1914; "A letter from William C. Stanton, Secretary of the Committee on Comprehensive Plans, addressed to the Librarian ... November 22, 1915. . . the asst. Librarian was authorized to inform the Committee that the contract for the architect was now in the hands of the city solicitor."

Academy trustees purchased on behalf of the city the adjoining 50' x159' lot along Frankford Avenue to provide a buffer for the library.¹² The current librarian is Kathy Huntzberry.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Holme Branch is the quintessential Carnegie branch library with Beaux Arts details and a T-shaped plan. The library is a single story on a raised basement, three bays across by two bays deep, with a perpendicular rear wing, four-bay-by-one-bay, to create an overall T-shaped building configuration. To the center of the front façade is an entry pavilion vestibule with a classically inspired frontispiece consisting of fluted Corinthian columns on a background of coved, ashlar stone with a garland outlining the top section. The columns support a stone entablature flanked by elaborate cartouches. A grouping of tripartite windows is located to either side of the entryway. Below each window is a brick spandrel consisting of a framework of bricks laid lengthwise and outlined by a perpendicular row of bricks with stone corner blocks and a stone cross pattern to the center. The windows in the rear T-shape section are the same, but with a simpler spandrel and have brick buttresses positioned between them. An overhanging dentiled stone cornice runs around the building, with a stone frieze below it in the entry pavilion section that corresponds to a corbelled brick beltcourse in the other sections. The wall terminates in a parapet roof line, behind which is likely found a flat roof (inaccessible, but supporting a skylight) in the main block. The rear T has a gabled roof with a parapet, the steps of which join with flanking interior chimneys, an ornamental feature that does not appear in the other Beaux Arts style branches.

2. Condition of fabric: The library appears to be well maintained and in good condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The main block measures 62' x 42' with a 45' x 36 section to the rear to form a T-shaped configuration.

2. Foundations: The foundations are likely of stone.

3. Walls: The walls are of brick in a running bond with a belt course. Stone is used to form a cap on the water table and for the sills. The cornice and frontispiece ornamentation is of terra cotta.

4. Structural systems, framing: The building is of load-bearing masonry construction. The King-Post trusses that support the rear T are exposed.

¹² "Celebrate 100 Years of Making a Difference," available at the Holmesburg Branch Library.

5. Porches, stoops: The front entry is reached via stone steps flank by low brick walls with a stone cap. Metal railings appear to the center and to either side of the stairway (installed after 1941, probably as part of the 1959 renovations).

6. Chimneys: Two interior brick chimneys flank the gable peak of the parapet roofline located to the rear elevation of the T section. They are of running-bond brick and are corbelled at the top.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The front entry consists of a pair of modern double doors in glass, over which is located a high, two-light, fixed transom. The entryway is flanked by fluted columns with elaborate composite capitals. Between the doors and the columns, the terra cotta facing is arranged to look like ashlar block. The inside course is also coved, and along the top portion is located an acanthus leaf garland with a keystone to the center. There is a side entry in the crux of the main block and rear T, over which is inscribed in a terra cotta panel "Lecture Room," and is flanked by emblems that include a lit torch and open book.

b. Windows and shutters: The typical window is a tripartite arrangement of one-over-one-light sash with a brick jack arch with terra cotta keystone and a coved stone sill supported by flanking brackets. Decorative spandrels are located below the windows in the main block, with a simpler spandrel appearing beneath the bays in the side elevations of the rear T-shaped section. There is a small window to each end of the side elevations of the T, and a tripartite window in the rear elevation, with a lintel of bricks turned on end and a corbelled brick sill. The basement windows have round-arched brick lintels.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The main block has a flat roof with skylight, located behind a brick parapet. The rear T-shaped wing has a gable roof with parapet.

b. Cornice, eaves: A molded cornice protrudes from the upper portion of the wall, below which is located dentil molding. In the front pavilion section where the main entry is located this pattern is enhanced a molded frieze and elaborate cartouches flank the panel in which is incised "THOMAS HOLME BRANCH." Above this, situated in the brick parapet, incised in a similar panel is "FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA," flanked by emblems including a lit torch, an open book, and the date ("19" to the left and "06" to the right).

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: One first enters into a vestibule and on the walls flanking are dedication plaques for the land and for the building itself. The interior is an opened T-shaped plan

that utilizes low shelving to divide the space. Adult and reference sections are located in the main block, with the children's section located in the rear T section. Of note is the inset coffered skylight in the center of the ceiling in the main reading room, and exposed trusses in the rear T section. There is a double-door entryway from the T section (at its juncture with the main reading room) into a side vestibule where there is located the "Lecture Room" entry from the outside and a stairway to the basement. The basement includes a large meeting room, boiler room, staff lounge and adjoining kitchen and bathroom, work room and public restrooms. There is also an emergency exit to the rear.

2. Stairways: The stairway to the basement is located off the rear-T section and is a dual run stair with a balustrade with turned posts and a heavy newel post.

3. Flooring: The floors in the main level are covered with industrial grade carpet, and there is linoleum tile flooring in the basement.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls on the main level are plaster painted a celery color with white ceiling trim. The ceiling in the main section is bisected by large coffers, and there is a skylight to the center. In the rear T section, the King Post trusses are exposed. The walls in both sections are lined with built-in shelving that rises up to meet the sills of the windows that are placed high on the walls to accommodate them.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The vestibule of the main entryway protrudes into the room and the door is surrounded by an entablature with two glass lights above. Metal-frame glass doors lead into the vestibule. The double doors that lead to the basement stair and side entry are wood panel with a single large light in the upper portion. They are set in a round-arched opening.

b. Windows: The window surrounds consist of plain framing.

6. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating: The ductwork for the heating system was installed above and below the built-in bookcases that line the walls throughout the library. The registers are visible indicators of this system. The mechanicals for the heating system are located in a basement room.

b. Lighting: The library is lit by half-dome light fixtures that hang from the ceiling, and the former skylight is now lit by artificial lighting.

c. Plumbing: The building includes restroom and kitchen facilities in the basement.

D. Site: The library is located along Frankford Avenue, a busy four-lane thoroughfare that feeds into the downtown area. It sits at the corner of Hartel Street. The area behind the library is

residential. The building sits on a very slight rise and there is a sidewalk along the street, leading up to the front entry, and around to the side elevation where the lecture hall entry is located. A hedgerow now appears along the edge of the rise where it meets the sidewalk, and a few foundation plantings have been added to either side of the front steps and walkway. An aluminum fence encloses a portion of the rear yard.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early views: Free Library of Philadelphia, *Annual Report of the Library Board, 1907*, William H. Rau, photographs.

B. Bibliography: The records of the Free Library of Philadelphia are located at the Central Library on Vine Street. The *Annual Reports* are located in the Municipal Reference Division, Cities P53-1154; and the Carnegie Fund Committee Minute Books are located in the Director's Vault (access by special permission).

1. Primary sources:

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The documentation of the Thomas Holme Branch Library was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the Heritage Documentation Programs of the National Park Service, Richard O'Connor, Chief during summer 2007 as part of a larger initiative to record the Carnegie Funded branch libraries of the Free Library of Philadelphia. The project is sponsored by HABS in cooperation with the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, John A. Gallery, director; and the Free Library of Philadelphia, William J. Fleming, Administrative Services Director, and made possible through a Congressional appropriation for recording in Southeastern Pennsylvania. The historical reports were prepared by Lisa P. Davidson and Catherine C. Lavoie. Large-format photography was undertaken for HABS by Joseph Elliott. Measured drawings were prepared of the Thomas Holme Branch as the typical branch library during the summer 2008. The drawings team was led by Robert Arzola, working with Jason McNatt, Paul Davidson, and Ann Kidd, architectural technicians.